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THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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No. 38

SBC budget overage disbursed to entities

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Seven Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) entities received nearly \$5 million for capital needs as a result of Cooperative Program (CP) gifts exceeding the 1996-97 SBC Program Allocation Budget.

Eleven SBC entities received their pro-rata budget percentages from an additional \$5 million over the regular budget.

When CP gifts surpass the allocation budget, distribution of those extra undesignated CP funds is one-half to the funded entities according to the standard budget distribution and one-half to a special capital needs budget approved by the SBC.

The SBC fiscal year ended Sept. 30 with a record \$155,005,723 in Cooperative Program gifts, compared to a budget figure of \$145,053,499.

The Sunday School Board and Woman's Missionary Union do not receive CP funds.

More missionaries overseas is one result of Southern Baptists' generosity, said Don Kammerdiener, International Mission Board (IMB) executive vice president.

"We are a people-sending agency. We base our ministry on the assumption that if we understand God's will about sending people, he will provide the support.

"This extra money — given by the dedication and generosity of Southern Baptists — confirms that God works in a coherent way in people's lives," Kammerdiener said.

"We are seeing extraordinarily high numbers of missionary

candidates coming forward this year again, and we anticipate appointing this year the highest number of new missionaries in 10 years. That raises the question, can we afford to send them?

"We believe that God doesn't say one thing to one part of the family and say something else to another part.

What God is saying to missionary candidates about giving their lives to mission service, he is also saying to Southern Baptists about providing support," Kammerdiener said.

Bob Reccord, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) said, "this exciting growth in CP giving proves what history shows — that Southern Baptists have at the very center of their hearts missions and evangelism."

It was the fourth year in a row that SBC agencies received funds for the Capital Needs Budget, which is scheduled over a 10-year period, 1990-91 to 1999-2000; \$8,850,851 remains to be funded in the next three years.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary and chairman of the Council of Seminary Presidents, said the tremendous response by Southern Baptists is "another sign of the greatness and goodness of God and of the generosity of the churches. ... Southern Baptist churches do have a Great Commission mentality."

In all, the IMB received more than \$75 million in Cooperative Program gifts for the year while

Southern Baptist Convention

1996-97 Cooperative Program Gifts	\$155,005,723
1996-97 Program Allocation Budget	\$145,053,499
Overage	\$9,952,224

Capital Needs Distribution

North American Mission Board	\$960,887
Southwestern Seminary	890,226
Southern Seminary	748,407
New Orleans Seminary	691,181
Midwestern Seminary	610,568
Golden Gate Seminary	573,248
Southeastern Seminary	501,592

Total\$4,976,112

Program Advance Funds

International Mission Board	\$2,488,077
North American Mission Board	1,134,283
Southwestern Seminary	285,173
Convention Operating Budget	239,869
Southern Seminary	215,815
New Orleans Seminary	185,803
Southeastern Seminary	137,961
Golden Gate Seminary	96,435
Midwestern Seminary	93,704
Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission	49,213
Annuity Board	37,875
Historical Library (Council of Seminary Presidents)	11,801

Total\$4,976,112

1996-97 SBC Total Gifts*\$296,553,715

*includes designated gifts, such as missions offerings.

Source: SBC Executive Committee

the NAMB received more than \$31 million.

IMB also received more than \$97 million in designated gifts, mostly Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions, while NAMB received more than \$43 million in designated gifts, mostly Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for

North American missions.

Undesignated CP gifts received by the SBC, \$155,005,723, plus the designated gifts received during the year, \$141,547,992, means Southern Baptists gave nearly \$300 million in 1996-97 to fund the SBC's missions and education enterprise.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

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The Bible in cyberspace

Cyberspace access to God's Word is expanding on the Internet's primary online Bible provider, Global Communications Network (GCN). A series of translations from the International Bible Society (IBS) will be added during the next six months to GCN's popular website, Bible Gateway, where more than 1.5 million "hits" are received each month.

"Many people around the world who are unable to have printed Scriptures in their own language for practical or political reasons will be able to read God's Word online," said IBS Communications Director Steve Johnson. "There is a tremendous opportunity for ministry through this expanded online service."

"There is no better use for this medium than getting God's Word into people's hands. We are thrilled to be working with IBS," said Robby Richardson, director of GCN, a part of Michigan-based Gospel Films.

GCN's technical experts will take IBS' translated Bible files and prepare them for the Bible Gateway where browsers can search the text by word or theme.

GCN's website is at <http://www.gospelcom.net/>.

Looking back

10 years ago

In a surprise announcement which stuns the faculty and student body, W. Randall Lolley announces plans to terminate his presidency at Southeastern Seminary after 13 years. The 56-year-old Alabama native is the only alumnus to serve as Southeastern president.

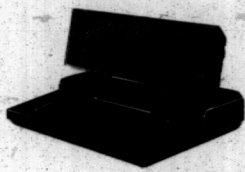
20 years ago

First Church, Jackson, sets a record in Sunday School attendance on High Attendance Sunday on Oct. 31 with a total of 2,322 persons in attendance in Sunday School. The church's goal was 2,225, or 1% of the state wide High Attendance Sunday goal of 225,000 people in attendance.

50 years ago

James Foster and his wife, the former Zelma Van Osdell of Pascagoula, sail from New Orleans for mission work in central China. Both are graduates of Mississippi College. James Foster earned his Master of Theology degree from the Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Much too beautiful a day

Last Friday was a beautiful day in Jackson, much too beautiful for flags to be flying at half-mast to mark the funeral of yet another police officer killed in the line of duty. Much too beautiful to see the sun reflecting off shiny law enforcement vehicles lined up around and beyond First Church, Jackson, as far as the eye could see. Much too beautiful to watch a 20-month-old child playing in her mother's lap during her father's funeral.

Yet that's what we were forced to do. For those of us who followed this sad story, it was the ruination of merely one beautiful day. For 27-year-old Brian Kinsey's young family and friends both inside and outside the close-knit fraternity of law enforcement officers, it was the ruination of a beautiful life.

For them, the pain goes infinitely deeper and will linger much too long. Only a few of us can imagine what they're going through. A husband, a father, a son, a brother, a peer, a good man — gone for no good reason.

What of his assailant? Cut down in a hail of SWAT gunfire when he refused to drop the shotgun he used two hours earlier to end Brian Kinsey's life, Eddie Bassett is gone, too, for no good reason.

And that no good reason is alcohol.

"He was OK, except when he drinks," said one acquaintance of Bassett's. "I loved him, but I saw what drinking was doing to him and our relationship," his girlfriend recalled.

Bassett's drunken rage against his girlfriend was the catalyst for this whole tragedy. A convicted felon, the 46-year-old's rap sheet listed a multitude of alcohol-related offenses, including several DUI charges and various incidents where he fought with police.

As television cameras scanned the murder scene in one of Jackson's poorest, most crime-ridden neighborhoods, the stockpile of empty beer cans on the front porch of the house was hard to miss. There appeared to be at least a dozen bent and crushed beer cans, maybe more.

So for the price of a couple of six-packs in the hands of a troubled man, an uncountable number of lives have been altered forever, and the tear in the fabric of our society became a little wider.

Was it worth it? Was it worth it to the businessman who made a few pennies in profit from the sale of those six-packs to Eddie Bassett?

Was it worth it to every taxpayer in Mississippi — you and me — who allegedly "benefits" from lower taxes because of the revenue alcohol brings into state government?

Was it worth it, Mr. and Mrs. Mississippi Baptist, to bring those same six-packs into your home and social life, thereby producing ill repute for your church by thumbing your nose at our highly-public stance against alcohol consumption?

Eddie Bassett should be held accountable as an individual for what he did, but don't overlook the societal lessons from this tragedy. Eddie Bassett pulled the trigger, but the businessman, the politician, ourselves — we all made this disgrace possible.

What will it take for us to understand the private and public tragedies wrought by alcohol?

Brian Kinsey proudly wore the badge given him by his now-retired police officer/mentor, and on the back of that badge

"THIS IS MY KIND OF
CHURCH — EVERYBODY
IS GLAD TO BE HERE,
AND NOBODY
THINKS HE
DESERVES TO BE!"



he taped a picture of his baby daughter, Lauryn. It was reported that Lauryn's picture was spattered with her father's blood from the blasts that killed him.

Before you take a drink from your next alcoholic beverage, take a moment to think about everything your action entails. Stare into that drink with all the intensity you can muster. If you have that much courage, don't be surprised if you see the faces of Brian and Lauryn Kinsey or some of the millions of other victims of this plague.

If enough of us do that, maybe — just maybe — we'll begin to understand.

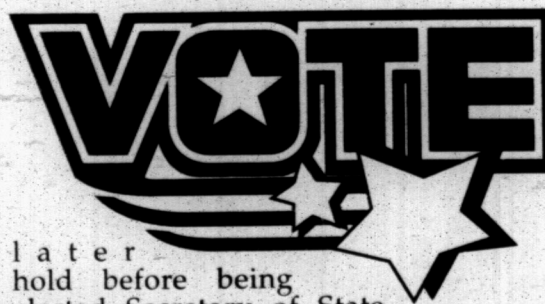
GUEST OPINION:



A solemn trust

By Eric Clark
Mississippi Secretary of State

VOTER AWARENESS SUNDAY
November 2, 1997



later hold before being elected Secretary of State. Although he left office after eight years (voluntarily), all his life he remained interested in politics and government. He used to say that he would rather someone vote against him than not vote at all.

My father believed that, after church and family, an American's most important responsibility is taking part in our government. He instilled in me a sense of responsibility to participate and vote. Like a lot of good habits learned at a young age, it's stuck with me to this day.

Voting is civic stewardship. The lesson of stewardship, taught in the parable of the talents, shows how we are held accountable for what God has given us (Matthew 25:14-30).

All of us, candidates and voters alike, are given talents by God. It is our responsibility to use these gifts wisely for the glory of God.

In everyday terms, that means our leaders must "walk the walk" everyday, not just

"talk the talk" at election time. And, it means that we, as voters, must participate, using God's word and guidance to view potential candidates.

Our founding fathers created a government that places a solemn trust in the people to choose our leaders. That privilege gives each of us the responsibility to uphold the liberty and freedom of our state and nation. We must vote to be worthy of that trust.

Our government can't work like it's supposed to without our committed involvement. It is up to us, through our thought, prayer, and action, to make sure our elected leaders and our government reflect our values. An election isn't just about choosing a new crop of politicians. An election is about servanthood and stewardship. As Christians and Americans, it is about us.

Clark is a member of First Church, Brandon, and a former deacon at First Church, Taylorsville.

Executive Committee selects two new staffers

By Tim Nicholas
MBCB Communication Director

The executive committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), meeting in Jackson on Oct. 21, elected two persons to assume staff positions with the convention board beginning on Nov. 10.

The two are Tammy Anderson, 28, who will serve as Acteens consultant in the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU); and Kimily Waldron, 36, who will be associate director of the Baptist Student Union (BSU) at the University of Mississippi in Oxford.

A native of Saraland, Ala., Anderson has served since February 1997 as minister of children and youth at Raymond Road Church in Jackson. Earlier, she was minister of youth at Lafitte Church, Saraland, Ala., 1994-95; and associate youth minister at First Church, Columbia, 1993-94.

Anderson's other work has included being on the staff of Centrifuge youth camps in Tennessee, (1993), Alabama (1992), and Glorieta, N.M. (1991).

She has also served as a secretary, Bible study leader, and student stable manager at

Baptist-affiliated Judson College, in Marion, Ala.

Anderson is a graduate of Judson College and earned the master of divinity degree in Christian education with an emphasis in youth and recreation from New Orleans Seminary in New Orleans.

Waldron has been special events administrator and communications specialist for the Baptist Foundation of Arizona since 1993. Earlier, she was associate BSU director at Tulsa Junior College in Tulsa, Okla. (1991-92) and at Arizona State University in Tempe (1988-89).

Waldron's other work includes a teller at a credit union in Burleson, Tex.; a marketing specialist for the Fort Worth Postal Credit Union; and

a dormitory supervisor at Glorieta Conference Center in New Mexico.

Waldron is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma at Norman, and earned the master of arts in religious education degree from Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth.

In other business, the executive committee approved five new board members from:

◆ Clarke Association - Tony Meinhardt, pastor of Rolling Creek Church, Quitman, to fill the unexpired term of Chester Carlisle, who resigned the pastorate of Pine Hill Church, Enterprise, in view of a call to pastor West End Church, Louisville.

◆ Copiah Association - Daryl Oster, pastor of Zion Hill Church, Wesson, to fill the unexpired term of Leroy Brewer Jr., who resigned as pastor of New Zion Church, Enterprise, in view of a call to pastor First Church, Fannin.

◆ Gulf Coast Association - Fred Womack, pastor of Diamondhead Church, Diamondhead, to fill the unexpired term of Ed Deuschle, pastor of First Church, Bay St. Louis, who resigned to accept the position of consultant in the MBCB Evangelism Department.



Anderson



Waldron

◆ Marion Association - James T. Ray, pastor of Bunker Hill Church, Columbia, to fill the unexpired term of Tommy King, pastor of Sandy Hook Church, Columbia, who resigned from the board.

◆ Attala Association - Wilbur Brunt, member of McCool Church, McCool, to fill the unexpired term of Joseph Knight, pastor of Parkway Church, Kosciusko, who resigned in view of a call to pastor Hollandale Church, Hollandale.

The executive committee also heard a report that a 1991 loan from Trustmark National Bank to upgrade computer services in the Baptist Building will be paid off in January, and that computer service charges to the MBCB departments will enable the board to repair and upgrade computer equipment in the future.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST Record

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NOBTS to host missionary appointment

NEW ORLEANS — More than 50 Southern Baptists will be appointed international missionaries Nov. 19 in New Orleans.

The missionary appointment service of the International Mission Board (IMB) begins at 7 p.m. in Leavell Chapel at New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS).

The event will be held in

conjunction with the seminary's Global Missions Week and the IMB trustee meeting Nov. 17-20.

"We want to impact our seminary community and beyond with a need for a renewed commitment to global evangelization," said Don Stewart, coordinator of Global Missions Week and director of

the seminary's doctor of ministry degree program. "We want our students and others to face honestly the possibility that God might be calling them to career mission service. We know God doesn't call everyone to (career) missions, but we pray that he will use this event to call out the called and affirm others in their commitment to mission support."

Before the service a "Global Walkabout" of mission displays will begin at 4:30 p.m. in the Hardin Student Center on campus. There participants can experience some sights and sounds of international missions and meet career missionaries and IMB staff members.

International missionaries also will help lead a children's mission event called "Around the World in 80 Minutes"—during the appointment service. Children will learn about missions and different cultures and unreached people groups through games and other activities. The event, held in the seminary's recreation center, is open to children in kindergarten through third grade. For reservations—which are required—contact Stewart's office at (504) 282-4455, ext. 3583.

After the appointment service, interested college students and campus ministers will have a chance to dialogue with veteran missionaries during a "Missions Afterglow" from 9 to 10:30 p.m., which will include music and mission testimonies.

Global Missions Week also features these international mission leaders:

◆ Bob Sjogren, co-founder of Frontiers, an interdenominational faith mission agency seeking to plant churches throughout the Muslim world, will speak during a 10 a.m. service Nov. 18 in Leavell Chapel.

Sjogren also will present "God's Heart for the Nations" at 3 p.m. daily on Nov. 18 and 19 in Martin Chapel on campus. The presentation deals with the Scriptures' unifying theme of global evangelization.

◆ IMB President Jerry Rankin will preach during a 9:45 a.m. chapel service Nov. 19 in Leavell Chapel.

Before becoming the agency's president in 1993, Rankin directed the board's work in Southern Asia and the Pacific and served as a missionary in Indonesia.

◆ David Garrison, associate vice president for strategy coordination and mobilization, will speak during a 10 a.m. service Nov. 20 in Leavell Chapel.

Garrison has been a leader among the board's efforts to develop strategies for evangelism and church planting among the world's unreached people groups.

For more information contact Mary Speidel, IMB, at (800) 999-2889, ext. 1467 or (804) 219-1467 or Debbie Moore, director of public relations, New Orleans Seminary, (504) 282-4455, ext. 3292.

Register elected

Dean Register, pastor of Temple Church, Hattiesburg, was elected president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) Oct. 28 in early balloting on the first day of the convention's annual meeting at First Church, Jackson.

Register defeated Clarence Cooper, pastor of Immanuel Church, Grenada, in a runoff by a margin of 630-486 to win his first term as president.

Clark Stewart, pastor of Harmony Church, Crystal Springs, also garnered 331 votes (28%) on the first ballot prior to the runoff between Register and Cooper.

Complete coverage of the MBC annual meeting will be published in the Nov. 6 issue of The Baptist Record.



Register

Old friends together



Renewing friendships following the 1997 Mississippi Baptist Pastors' Conference on Oct. 27 were (from left) Nathan Harper, youth minister at Trinity Church, Fulton; James L. Travis, longtime professor of Bible at Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain; and Bert Harper, alumnus of Blue Mountain College and pastor of West Jackson Church, Tupelo. Bert is Nathan's father. Complete coverage of the pastors' conference and Mississippi Baptist Convention will be published in the Nov. 6 issue of The Baptist Record. (Photo by Carl M. White)

Clarke star symbolic of school's commitment

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Final of a two-part series

When Baptist-affiliated Clarke College in Newton closed in May 1992, there were officially 105 students enrolled with a faculty and staff of 24.

Most of the students were able to transfer their credits to other institutions. Most of the faculty and staff went on to other jobs or retirement. With the completion of the sale of the campus to the State of Mississippi this past August, it appears that Clarke College is history.

Not quite. There is something of Clarke College that lives on — a legacy of service to the cause of the Kingdom of God that is perhaps best symbolized by the large blue star emblazoned with the words "Lottie Moon" that hangs on the wall in the Alumni House, a small house on the one acre of the former college property set aside for the Clarke Alumni Association (CAA) by messengers to the Mississippi Baptist

Baptist Convention who approved the sale of the property.

The big blue star is covered with lights which would be turned on as the Clarke College family contributed toward reaching their goal for the Lottie Moon Christmas offering for foreign missions.

J. B. Costilow, for 34 years Baptist Student Union Director at Clarke, remembers how excited students would be as they turned on lights indicating progress toward the goal.

"Some of the students would tremble with excitement," he recalled. Costilow said he knew of students who would go without meal money in order to give toward the Lottie Moon goal. "That was the way it was at Clark. Missions was that important."

On a table next to the star is an artificial Christmas tree with gold ornaments hanging all around. It is called the "Mission Tree," for each ornament has engraved on it the name and location of a former Clarke student or alumni who is serving Christ somewhere in the world.

Marian Thornton, former music instructor and alumni director, pointed to the tree. "(Clarke President Lowery) Compere developed a mission oriented school. We have a marvelous legacy," she said.

Eddie Ruddick came to Clarke in 1981 aware of the fact that the school was in trouble. However, he felt a call. "Clarke was doing what I wanted to do, working with bivocational ministers," he said.

Ruddick feels the closing of Clarke College left a void in the training of ministers to work in small rural and city churches.

"We are obligated to recreate, either at (Miss. Baptist-affiliated) Blue Mountain College, Mississippi College or William Carey College (WCC), something of the mission and work of Clarke for the bivocational minister," he said.

"I am very much in favor of the convention continuing that kind of work. If we are to reach the black population of



STANDING ROOM ONLY — Clarke College students and faculty in this school annual photo from the 1960's gather for a chapel service, held daily the Baptist-affiliated school's Newton campus. (BR special photo)

Mississippi we need bivocational ministers, the kind of worker who goes into a small community and presents a role model, whether black or white.

"There is a need for pastors who are willing to work hard five days a week and then pastor a church on the weekend. Clarke was helping to meet this need," he said.

Juanita West, former English and speech instructor at Clarke, added, "I think the movement of WCC to start their school of missions was a statement that the Clarke calling was missing in this state."

Clarke's contribution was more than training ministers, according to Juanita Williams. Williams taught development work at Clarke for 24 years.

"I always appreciated the opportunity for serving God that being at Clarke provided," she said. "I think statistics would show that Clarke students over the years went into education as much as anything else."

"The school stood for Christian principles. It was like a little bit of heaven on earth. I remember going to Ridgecrest (Conference Center in North Carolina) and thinking, 'This is no more than what we have at Clarke all the time.'"

"In addition, Clarke was a good school. People talk a lot about the spiritual atmosphere, but outside people don't appreciate the strong academics we had at Clarke," Williams said.

CAA is continuing the tradition of collecting funds for the Lottie Moon Offering. This year's goal is \$5,000, according to James Griffith, president of CAA. The offering is to be received the first Sunday of December at 5 p.m. at the alumni house.

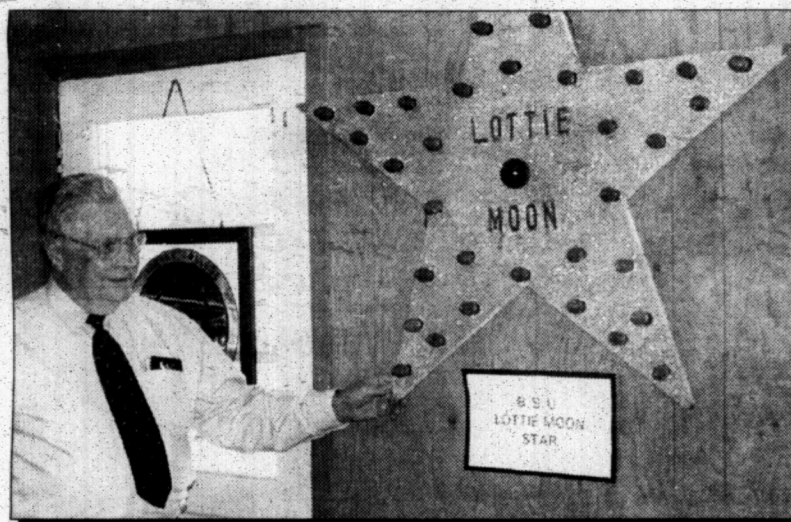
CAA also has an annual homecoming in April and an alumni breakfast each fall at the Mississippi Baptist Convention, Griffith said.

The 1998 homecoming is April 18 at the alumni house in Newton.

The former staff and faculty of Clarke College also have words of advice for Mississippi Baptist. Foremost is a warning not to take Christian higher education for granted.

"Do everything possible to guard every-one of our institutions of Christian higher education," West said.

Williams added, "We tend to forget the good when we focus on the bad. So many people have made so many wonderful contributions. We are thankful for them all."



TRADITION REMAINS — J. B. Costilow, retired Baptist Student Union Director at Clarke College, points to the Lottie Moon Star that was displayed each Christmas season on the Clarke Campus to motivate students and faculty to support the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. (Photo by Carl M. White)

The Royal Ambassador Pledge

As a Royal Ambassador I will do my best:

to become a well-informed, responsible follower of Christ;

to have a Christlike concern for all people;

to learn how the message of Christ is carried around the world;

to work with others in sharing Christ; and

to keep myself clean and healthy in mind and body.

The invitation is extended.
"Follow me..."
The promise is made.
"...and I will make you..."
A lifestyle begins.
"...fishers of men."
Matthew 10:1
Royal Ambassador Week:
November 2-8, 1997
"Following Jesus' Footsteps"

Miss. firm releases Disney boycott survey

JACKSON, Miss. (ABP and local reports) — Less than a third of Baptists, including Southern Baptists, agree with the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) boycott of The Disney Co., according to a recent survey by a Mississippi polling firm.

Conducted by Southern Research Group (SRG) of Jackson for Associated Baptist Press (ABP), the telephone survey interviewed Baptists in the 14-state Southeastern region of the United States, where most of the 16 million Southern Baptists live.

SRG is the only full-service market research firm in the state, according to a company spokesperson. Owned by Dan C. Davis and founded in 1985, SRG focuses on market research for business and corporations through telephone surveys, mail surveys, focus groups and other avenues of market research.

Of those Baptists who support the boycott, about half (48.8%) have avoided buying Disney products, the survey found.

Researchers interviewed 610 randomly-selected adults representing a variety of Baptist groups and theological view-

points. Only those Baptists who described themselves as "fundamentalists" voiced more support than opposition to the boycott — 45% to 43%, with 7% not expressing an opinion.

The Disney boycott, approved by messengers attending the SBC last June, is intended to pressure Disney to reverse policies that critics say benefit homosexuals and detract from the company's traditional pro-family image.

The boycott resolution, which passed overwhelmingly, urged Baptists to "refrain from patronizing" movies, theme parks, and merchandise outlets from Disney and more than 200 subsidiaries.

Among those Baptists who said the SBC best represents their point of view, 14.3% said they agree with the boycott and 15.8% strongly agree. However,

26.7% said they disagreed with the boycott and 28.2% said they strongly disagreed.

Respondents who said their point of view is best represented by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a moderate group, opposed the boycott even more often, with 81% against and 8% in favor.

The study also assessed support for the boycott according to theological positions, with more conservative respondents showing more support.

Of those of who described themselves as "fundamentalists," 45% disagreed with the boycott, while 43% agreed. Among self-described "conservatives," 50% disagreed and 37% supported the boycott.

Among "moderates," 82% said they opposed the boycott, while 10% were for it. Those

who described themselves as "liberal" opposed the boycott, 83% against and 5% for.

The findings of the ABP survey paralleled those of an earlier study of Alabama residents.

An August study by Southern Opinion Research of Tuscaloosa, Ala., found 57% of Alabama residents disagreed with the boycott, while 33% of the state's residents supported the boycott call. Among those in the Alabama survey who identified themselves as Baptists, 52% said they disagreed with the boycott, while 40% supported it.

Disney stock dropped nearly 10% in the weeks immediately following the SBC boycott, to \$77.0625 a share. By Oct. 13, however, the price had rebounded to \$84.625 — 75 cents below a 52-week high set May 12.

Pastor likens boycott to 'tough love'

KISSIMMEE, Fla. (BP and local reports) — First Church, Kissimmee, Fla., is seven miles from the front gates of Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom. More than 100 Disney employees are members

of the growing church near the epicenter of the world's most popular tourist destination.

Yet the church's pastor, Tim Wilder, didn't hesitate to vote in favor of the resolution on moral stewardship addressing The Disney Company during the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) this past June.

Wilder said it's a matter of "tough love."

"Out of my love for them, I just can't ignore them and turn my back on them," said Wilder, who has served on First Church's staff more than 16 years, the last year and a half as senior pastor.

"The Bible teaches when you truly love somebody, you don't ignore them when you see them going down the wrong road; out of love you try to bring them back."

Wilder, who grew up in the central Florida area, was a frequent visitor to the Disney theme parks. He and his wife even celebrated their honeymoon there.

He said he yearns for the day the entertainment giant will heed the call to return to its traditional roots.

"I don't want them to destroy themselves, I want to go back out there again and take my kids and watch their movies," he said, noting that the Disney empire was built on family values. "Out of my love for them, I have to reach out to them and bring them back."

Upon his return from the SBC annual meeting in Dallas, Wilder met with church members who were also Disney employees to assure them he wanted only the best for them and their employer, telling them he wanted them to stay at Disney.

"We want Christians there; we do want to make a difference from the inside out," Wilder reiterated, calling the Disney employees "our missionaries."

"You can take a stand for truth based upon your convic-

tions and not do it in an ugly or judgmental way and also encourage your people to aid in the change from the inside out. Pastors don't need to be afraid to stand up for the issues.

"We've been quiet for too long; that is why we're in the mess we are in," he stressed.

"Sometimes we have been guilty of screaming and being ugly about some issues," Wilder reflected, saying there is a healthy balance of speaking the truth in love.

Wilder said he was careful about respecting individual church members' consciences on the matter: "I didn't come across telling them they had to follow my lead. This is my stance; I asked them to pray about their response."

The church is often at the forefront of Christian response to social issues, operating the Osceola Pregnancy Center on church property and providing shepherding homes for women who are pregnant and need a place to stay.

The Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission recently announced a similar shepherding program for Mississippi churches.

Despite some fears the issue would disrupt the fellowship of the church, Wilder said summer attendance was stronger than ever and the church is ahead on its annual budget.

"We want to do more than just stand up and speak out; we want to minister," Wilder said, also telling of plans to develop a ministry to the homosexual community in cooperation with the Exodus organization.

"I want homosexuals here in our church, visiting with us, so they can hear the gospel," the pastor said.

The world wants to justify its behavior by what feels good rather than what the Bible says, Wilder said. "I'm not politically correct. I'm striving to be biblically correct."



Central, McComb celebrates 75th

Central Church, McComb, will celebrate its 75th anniversary of the dedication of the church on Nov. 30. The schedule will be as follows: 9:30 a.m., Sunday School; 10:30 a.m., worship; 11:30 a.m., dinner on the grounds; 1 p.m., program presenting history of Central Church, and re-dedication. Mike Everett is pastor.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

My five-year-old's best friend has apparently witnessed her divorced mother in explicit sexual situations, because the child has described sex acts in detail to my daughter. How should I address this, both from my child's standpoint and the other child's situation?

First of all, keep in mind that you are talking to five-year-olds. Answer their questions honestly but as briefly as possible. They don't have use for a lot of details and are not yet old enough to understand the moral aspects of this situation, but they need simple, truthful answers from someone they trust — you. Although your child's innocence has been compromised, this is a teachable moment. Don't react with shock or embarrassment; if you do, your daughter may not ask again about such matters. You have a wonderful opportunity to explain the beauty of God's love as reflected in the faithful, lifetime marriage commitment between one man and one woman. Point your daughter toward Scripture passages that emphasize this commitment. There are excellent books that deal specifically with children and sexuality in age-appropri-

ate formats. Ask your pastor or a Christian counselor to recommend some of these books. Most importantly, conduct yourself as a role model and as someone to whom these two young children can come for advice and prayer. It doesn't get any better than that!

When my baby died, did he go to heaven?

I do not find anything in Scripture that deals specifically with whether babies go to heaven, but I rest upon the personhood of God as seen through his Son, Jesus Christ, who said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matt. 19:14 NIV) Babies have no ability to discern a sinful nature, and I cannot see God condemning them. I see God bringing them closer to him. I believe we will know our loved ones in heaven, and we will be able to recognize the saints just as the apostles did on the Mount of Transfiguration. I hope these thoughts are of some comfort in your loss; we are assured of an eternity the awesomeness of which we cannot begin to grasp.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

Pollsters debate variance in survey outcomes

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — To politicians and captains of private enterprise, opinion polls have long been seen as valuable tools to track changes in American tastes, views, and practices, but in recent years many church leaders also have begun to pay attention to poll results in areas involving spirituality, such as church attendance, Bible reading, belief in God, and religious affiliation.

Yet on occasion, polls may become difficult to interpret when various pollsters ask the same question but report different results.

Such was the case earlier this year when two nationally known polling organizations — Barna Research Group and the Gallup Poll — each released figures tracking the frequency of church attendance by American adults.

On the one hand, a Barna news release showed "Christianity is showing signs of revival. ... The multi-year decline of Christianity appears to have bottomed out, and the Christian faith is now experiencing a renaissance of sorts."

On the other hand, the Gallup Poll showed church attendance at its lowest level ever since Gallup began asking the question in 1939.

Specifically, the Barna poll showed 43% of American adults said they had attended church during a typical week — up 6 points from a 15-year low of 37% in 1996, just a year earlier.

The Gallup Poll, however, showed only

35% of adults had attended church or synagogue in the past seven days — down 4 points from 39% in 1996.

"We at Gallup would not say that represents a significant change in America's church attendance pattern," said Frank Newport, editor-in-chief of the Gallup Poll, in an interview with Baptist Press.

Both Newport and David Kinnaman, Barna's research director, granted interviews on a wide range of topics related to opinion polls and were asked to comment on the differences between the two polls.

Without comparing the two polls in specific detail, both spoke generally about the factors that can cause differences.

Regarding church attendance figures, Newport said, "It looks like other researchers in this area are attaching more importance to these fluctuations than we at Gallup would."

"We would want to see if this represents a sustainable pattern. I would be sensitive about putting a tremendous amount of attention to any one measurement."

Kinnaman said any number of variables can influence the outcome of different polls, including methodology, question order, how respondents were selected and the wording of questions.

In Barna's case, the question about church attendance read: "In the last seven days, did you attend a church service, not including a special event, such as a wedding or funeral?"

Newport noted Gallup has been asking

the same question of Americans since 1939, which is: "Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days, or not?"

The number of people polled also is critical to achieving trustworthy results, Newport suggested. "Almost all reputable polls have 800 to 1,000 people in a national survey. This produces a margin of error of 2 to 3 percentage points."

"In a generalized rule of thumb, the more the people in the sample, the smaller the margin of error," Newport said, "but if the number of people surveyed is smaller, the margin of error would be higher. If only 150 people were surveyed, the margin of error would be quite large."

Another factor that can impact poll results is how the questions are worded.

"Question wording is an absolutely vital piece of the research picture," Kinnaman observed. It is an art, not a science. Developing question wording is a process of going through and evaluating the effects of different questions and the way you word them."

In general, pollsters should lay aside their own philosophical views in order to arrive at accurate results, Newport said.

"In theory, polling should be as neutral and value-free as possible — not trying to bring any kind of bias to it — though some people say it's impossible for a scientist not to bring presuppositions to work," he said.

Gallup chief: Polls can be useful tools for churches

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Church leaders can and should use the results of opinion polls in ministry and program planning, according to two officials with national polling firms.

"I'm a big believer in survey research, even in a church or mission setting," said Frank Newport, editor-in-chief of the Gallup Poll, Princeton, N.J. "It's very useful for leaders to have an idea of the attitudes and opinions of the people

they're trying to serve."

Newport — who grew up in Fort Worth, Texas, as the son of John Newport, a longtime administrator and professor at Southwestern Seminary — said membership polls can be useful tools.

However, in a church setting — unlike on a national basis — it may be better to do a census, which is a poll of the entire membership, Newport said. "That means every single per-

son in the church receives a survey to fill out."

Both the Barna Research Group and Gallup Poll have been highly influenced by pollsters who themselves are Christians.

Barna was founded by George Barna, a widely published Christian author of such books as "User Friendly Churches," "The Power of Vision," "Generation Next" and "Evangelism That Works."

Besides its polls that track the state of American's faith — which are released in the Barna Report, a bimonthly newsletter — Barna also helps ministry organizations find information they need and "conducts research for churches and organizations so they can better

understand their context," said Barna research director David Kinnaman.

Newport acknowledged the Princeton center and the Gallup Poll make up only a relatively small part of what the greater Gallup Organization does. "Over 90% of what we do is working for business and industry, providing information on customer satisfaction and marketing. The poll is a small but very important percentage of our overall activities."

Gallup Poll figures are regularly released in partnership with Cable Network News (CNN) and USA Today and in a column distributed by the Los Angeles Times Syndicate, Newport noted.

Claude H. Stone Sr., dies; retired minister of music

Claude H. Stone Sr., 91, a resident of Gulfport, died Sept. 23. Funeral services were held Sept. 27 at New Hope Church, Biloxi, where he was a member, and burial in Evergreen Cemetery in Gulfport.

A native of Leeds, Ala., Stone was former minister of music at New Hope Church, East Howard Church, Biloxi; Grace Memorial Church, Gulfport, and Gulfport Heights Church.

Stone is survived by his wife of 69 years, Hazel Ladner Stone of Gulfport; sons, C. H. Stone Jr., Glenn Stone, both of Gulfport, and Timothy Dale Stone of New Orleans, La.; daughters, Ethel Smith, Vee Dell May, both of Gulfport, Lana G. Sumerall of Leavenworth, Kansas, and Carolyn Ann Donald of White Settlement, Texas; and sister, Ruth Hammond of Gulfport.

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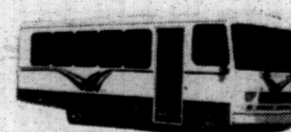
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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS

Matthew 10:27 NAS

October 30, 1997

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.

Toward a Growing Marriage seminar to be held

A practical seminar for Christian couples – married or thinking about getting married – who want to have God's best in marriage, will take place in Jackson on Feb. 20-21, 1998, at Broadmoor Baptist church.

The seminar, entitled "Toward a Growing Marriage," will be led by Gary Chapman, author of the best-selling book, "The Five Love Languages," and a book with the same title as the seminar.

Co-sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Discipleship and Family Ministry Department and the Baptist Sunday School Board, the program will offer practical ways to make good marriages better and how to help friends and family members who are

experiencing marital stress.

Topics include how to communicate in the midst of conflict, how to avoid financial bondage, how to make sex a mutual joy, and how to rekindle love or keep it alive.

The seminar begins on Friday evening at 7, and continues on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Everyone is asked to bring a sack lunch on Saturday.

Chapman is director of adult ministries at Calvary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Early registration saves money at \$35 for individuals; \$65 for married or engaged couples. At the door the cost is \$45 for individuals; \$75 for couples.



...And they will become one flesh. Genesis 2:24

SEMINAR COST	Individual	Engaged/Married Couple
Early Registration Fee:	\$35	\$65
Registration Fee:	\$45	\$75

REGISTRATION

Return registration form to your seminar coordinator or mail to: Chapman Seminars

Post Office Box 24001 • Nashville, TN 37203

For more information or to register call 800/254-2022.

Co-sponsored by Discipleship and Family Ministry
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME _____

SPOUSE'S NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

DAYTIME PHONE _____

CHURCH GROUP _____

CIRCLE AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$65 FOR COUPLE \$35 FOR INDIVIDUAL
PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD

1998 ALL-STATE REHEARSAL CAMP AND TOUR

June 15-23, 1998

Rehearsal Camp at
William Carey College

Register through the
Church Music Department
two weeks prior to audition.



ALL-STATE AUDITIONS

November '97 Choral Auditions

1st	9 a.m.-noon	Baptist Building, Jackson
3rd	5-8 p.m.	Clarksdale BC, Clarksdale
8th	10 a.m.-noon	FBC, Ocean Springs
15th	12-2 p.m.	FBC, Summit
17th	5-8 p.m.	FBC, Meridian

November '97 Choral & Orchestral Auditions

20th	5-8 p.m.	Thomas Fine Arts Building William Carey College
21st	5-8 p.m.	Alta Woods BC, Jackson
22nd	12-4 p.m.	North Oxford BC, Oxford

(ALL instrumentalists will be expected to audition vocally.)

'97 Choral Auditions Continued

Parkway BC, Natchez

CAMPUS DAYS FOR GAS AND ACTEENS

Blue Mountain College

November 15
11 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

William Carey College

January 24
3 p.m.-7 p.m.

Mississippi College

February 21
11 a.m.-3 p.m.

*Missionaries • Basketball • Testimonies
Cheerleaders • Music*

Cost \$7.50

(Includes: basketball game, meal, program and limited insurance)

For more information, contact the WMU Department at
800/748-1651 or 968-3800 in Jackson.

Correction:

In the previous issue of **Housetops**, the date for the
William Carey College Campus Days was incorrectly advertised as
being on January 17.

We apologize for any confusion this might have caused.

Queen's Court

Camp Garaywa November 14-15, 1997

Friday 5 p.m. - Saturday Lunch

*For Acteens Involved in StudiAct
(Queen Level and Above)*

\$23 per person

(includes meals, lodging, crafts and limited insurance)

What to Bring: sheets or sleeping bag, pillowcases, towels,
casual clothes, comfortable shoes, Bible,
paper and pencil, personal items

Registration Deadline: Friday, November 7, 1997

Registration Form - Queen's Court

Church _____ Association _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Daytime Phone _____

Person sending in registration _____

Number of people _____ x \$23 per person = \$ _____

*Make checks payable to WMU
Mail to: WMU - Queen's Court
P O Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530*

21 Ways to Start Discipleship Training

1. Elect a director. Every church should elect a director who would do some type of discipleship training throughout the year. One short-term training event would help your church.
 2. Meet with new Christians and lead them through the Survival Kits.
 3. Begin age group studies using the suggested quarterlies.
 4. Provide studies based on needs of adults in your church. Survey for needs.
 5. Teach the annual doctrine study - five sessions - providing for preschool, children, youth, as well as adults.
 6. Small churches may combine age groups to provide studies. For instance, consider preschoolers and children meeting together for the doctrine study or other unit of study, while adults and youth are meeting together.
 7. Each quarter offer a study - LIFE Course. This may be six weeks, eight weeks, or 13 weeks. You may not meet every Sunday in the quarter.
 8. Use the semester approach. Offer two or three semesters each year. Begin first in September ending mid-December or mid-November. The second semester could begin mid-January and conclude in mid-May. The third semester could be a shorter one in June and July. Use non-dated study material: LIFE Courses, Study Course Books, Survival Kits, or dated curriculum.
 9. Provide New Member Orientation every Sunday you have new members.
 10. Teach a basic doctrine study over a six-week period at a time convenient for a group of people.
 11. Consider that a group of eight to 10 adults is adequate to meet for discipleship training anytime during the week.
 12. Teach "Share Jesus Without Fear" immediately following Witness Commitment Sunday in October.
 13. One-on-one is a viable way of doing discipleship training.
 14. Make available study books for individuals to study at home. Ask them to come together after adequate time has been allowed for them to read the book, to discuss the answers to suggested questions for study course credit.
 15. Offer a class for prospective leaders.
 16. Enlist a leader for an Intercessory Prayer Group to meet weekly for a limited time.
 17. Offer a class for those who want to discover their spiritual gifts. Teach "Gifts of Grace: Discovering and Using your Spiritual Gifts."
 18. Start a group to support a given need in your community: divorce recovery, loss of spouse, substance abuse, parents of teens.
 19. Teach the understanding age group series books an hour before the Sunday p.m. worship or on Wednesday p.m. for parents and Sunday School or other leaders.
 20. Offer a class for children who make professions of faith during Bible School or during the summer revival. Use "Survival Kit for Christians" or "Now That I'm a Christian."
 21. Train deacons to be deacons or to visit.
- P.S.** The Discipleship & Family Ministry Department is willing to work with you to plan, coordinate and evaluate and can help you find any of the above mentioned materials.

IN CONCERT

November 9

7 p.m.

Highland Baptist Church
Meridian

Jim Brannon
pastor

Franklin Denham
minister of music





Meaning and Purpose of Christ's Coming

Keeping Christ in Christmas seems to become more difficult with each passing year. For most people it is just a matter of knowing the meaning of Christmas, a time of worship and celebration. The weeks prior to Christmas can be meaningful as well. Just as Joseph and Mary looked forward to the birth of Jesus and his advent into our world, so do we as we celebrate his birth. This time of anticipation prior to Christmas Day is thus referred to as the season of advent.

Special observance of this time cannot be grasped hastily. The emphasis on waiting, spiritual preparation, and longing for God can put the focus on the real meaning of Christmas as well as unite the family in love, warmth, gratitude and worship.

Celebration of Christ's Coming

A wreath is often used to visualize our thinking and talking about Jesus during special times of fellowship and family worship during this season. The shape of the wreath, with no beginning or end, signifies the eternity of God's creation, and the endlessness of his love and care for man.

The evergreen foliage serves as a reminder that our faith, our hope, and our love are ever alive and come from God and his Son.

Four candles are placed in the wreath, representing the four Sundays prior to Christmas Day. Three of the candles are purple, the color associated with kings and royalty, and one is pink, representing joy. A fifth white candle, placed in the center of the wreath, sometimes referred to as a "Christ candle," is lighted on Christmas eve or Christmas day. The white symbolizes the purity and sinlessness of Christ's life.

Using this guide

This weekly Family Celebration of Christmas Guide is designed to be used during the four weeks prior to Christmas Day. It may be used at a time and place of the family's choosing.

A wreath may be a part of this special time, serving as a visual aid and point of focus for family members reminding them of the mighty act of God sending his Son into our world as Savior. As a part of this celebration, the lighting of candles each week, which symbolize the key ideas, may be helpful.

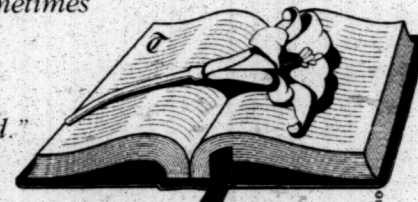


Family Celebration of Christmas

Celebration of Hope - The Fourth Week Before Christmas

The Sunday of the fourth week before Christmas is the beginning of the first week of Advent, or celebration of the "coming" of Jesus as God's gift to the world. Hope was first born as prophets made known Christ's coming. Prophets were people who told others about God's Son coming to earth. If using a wreath, the lighting of the first purple candle in the wreath represents the "Prophecy of Hope." This is sometimes referred to as the prophets' candle.

Read: "Make ready the way of the Lord."
Matthew 3:3 (NASB)



Discuss the way the celebration of Christmas will be observed in your home. Talk about why your family observes this season as it does. Feel free to offer suggestions of new things you could do that you have not done in the past while keeping those things which have been meaningful. Remember that different kinds of activities suit different ages, so a variety would be good.

Additional Readings:

Old Testament: Jeremiah 31:31
New Testament: Galatians 3:14-18

Suggested Family Activities:

Explain that a "covenant" is like a very serious promise. God promised a new covenant. Ask, "Did God keep his promise about a new covenant? How?" Invite each family member to make a promise to another family member that can be accomplished during this first week of celebration. Write the promise on a piece of paper and place in small dish next to the wreath. After the Bible reading and devotion time each evening, remind each person of their promise that is in the dish. Saturday, take out the promises and ask if each person completed their promise.



Sing: "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

The Christmas season is an important time in the life of the church and the individual Christian. The Family Celebration of Christmas plan has been developed in an effort to assist families and churches in focusing on the true meaning of Christmas.

In each of this year's remaining issues of **HouseTops** you will find devotions to use weekly during this advent season.

We hope these will enrich your family as you seek to keep Christ at the center of the Christmas celebration.

If you would like an additional copy of these devotions, contact the Department of Student Work at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 or call 800/748-1651 or in Jackson, 968-3800.

COME SHARE EXPERIENCES OF RECONCILIATION ACHIEVED



December 12 and 13, 1997
Duncan-Gray Conference Center
Canton, Mississippi

with

Steve Small, pastor
True Light Baptist Church

L. Graham Smith, director
Church Music Dept., MBCB

Beverly Sonnier, consultant
D.C. Baptist Convention, Washington, D.C.

Richard Brogan, consultant
Missions Extension Dept., MBCB

Gene Fant, pastor
Center Terrace Baptist Church, Canton

Lloyd Blue, director
Church Growth Unlimited, Mendenhall

Pray this day for...

October 31-November 13, 1997

Prayer Ministry Office • P. O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

God Wants Us To Pray For Everyone

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

-1 Timothy 2:1-4

Voter Awareness Day (CAC)
For RA Week 2-7 (BRO)
Pray for tentmakers living in Laos to be effective witnesses of the gospel. Ask that they be given favor by the government.

Give thanks to God for a significant meeting held in the village of Yadala, India. A village leader had canceled the meeting because he was opposed to it. After a believer spoke with him, he not only allowed the meeting to go on but attended it as well. Five people made decisions, and regular meetings will take place in Yadala from now on.

For 636 Cambodian adults who are learning to read for the first time. Ask that each of them be given daily renewed motivation and perseverance. Ask that as they learn, they might read and understand the most important book in the world and, through its pages meet the Savior.

For Reconciliation Seminar, Grace Temple BC, Gulfport; 10th-11th (MEAA)
For the Filipino Fellowship in Cyprus as they strive to reach out to domestic workers all over the island.

Pray that today the Bible will be read by many Vietnamese who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and pray that through His Word, God will draw these readers to Himself.

Missionaries Charley Hood & Milton Lites are beginning several Bible studies in Ciudad Salitre, a neighborhood in Bogota, Colombia. Pray that their goal of establishing a cell group in every apartment complex in Ciudad Salitre will be realized.

Pray for a Beninese evangelist in Benin who has moved with his family into a new area that is strongly resistant to the gospel. They are facing great pressure to leave. Pray that he will have God's peace and be faithful in completing the work set before him.

For Home Schoolers. Dave Baldwin, DOM for the Tanana Valley Baptist Association, Fairbanks, AK, encourages churches to plan fellowship meetings for parents who home school their children. In these meetings they can get to know each other, share ideas, questions, materials, etc.

A Burkinabe pastor in Burkina Faso is in need of heart surgery to replace a faulty valve. Pray that the Lord will guard his health during this waiting period.

Pray for Ronald S. Morgan, a Mission Service Corp volunteer, Seneca, S.C. He and others have begun an outreach ministry to sportsmen and truckers called The Fast Lane Trucker's Ministry.

Pray for 10 pastorless churches in the Metropolitan Baptist Association, Indianapolis, Indiana. Pray that God will provide more bivocational pastors.

For International Student Conference; Camp Garaywa, 7th-9th (STU WRK)

Give thanks to God that the Department of Social Welfare in the Philippines is encouraging Bible studies in the shelter for battered women. Pray for the missionary women leading these weekly Bible studies.

For missionaries John & Kathy Vaughn as they minister to the working-class neighborhood of Santa Corona, Brazil, with a children's program on Saturdays, a worship service on Sunday a.m., and as they try to reach the upper-class community through an English-language worship service on Sunday p.m.

NOVEMBER

- 3-76 MISS STEPHANIE COREY
7336 Anela Place, Diamondhead, MS 39520
Parents: Charles & Patricia, Field Personnel Assistance
- 4-86 MISS KATIE R. GRAY,
R. Ruy Pinto Bandeira 1112
29090-130 Victoria, ES, BRAZIL
Parents: Tony & Karen, Music Promotion
- 6-88 MISS MARISA M. WOMBLE
Casilla 1415, Asuncion, PARAGUAY
Parents: Freddie & Karen, General Evangelism
- 13-78 MR. T. KYLE WHITE
P O Box 864888, Tuscaloosa, AL 35486-0044
Parents: Jerry & Glenda, General Evangelism; SERVE IN KOREA
- 14-85 MR. ALLEN D. LIGHTSEY, VIP SAL #731
P O Box 52-5364, Miami, FL 33152-5364
Parents: Timothy & Rebecca, Church & Home Outreach; SERVE IN EL SALVADOR
- 20-78 MR. JOHN A. LATHAM, Baylor University
P O Box 81835, Waco, TX 76798
Parents: Tony & Kathy, Theological Education by Extension; SERVE IN PHILIPPINES
- 20-83 MISS MICHELLE S. SHEARER
- 20-85 MISS KIMBERLY D. SHEARER, Apartado 2307, Arequipa, PERU
Parents: Kevin & Pam, General Evangelism
- 21-76 MISS CHRISTINA S. WALLACE, USM
P O Box 4805, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-4805
Parents: Karl & Peggy, Mission Administration; SERVE IN COLOMBIA
- 22-77 MISS ALICIA K. PARKER, William Carey College
Box 1353, 498 Tuscan Ave., Hattiesburg, MS 39401-5499
Parents: Ronnie & Beth, Music Promotion; SERVE IN BRAZIL
- 30-85 MR. JEFFREY R. PARKER, II
P O Box 943, Brandon, MS 39042
Parents: Jeffrey & Shiela, General Evangelism; SERVE IN UNITED KINGDOM



1998 Senior Adult Retreats

"Equipping Seniors for Service"
GULFSHORE BAPTIST ASSEMBLY

Retreat I - May 19-22

Bill Causey, MBCB, Jackson
"Victory Singers"-FBC, Hattiesburg
James Haynes, FBC, Hattiesburg

Retreat II - May 25-27

Bobby Shows, senior adult consultant,
Missouri Baptist Convention
"Heavenly Sunlight Singers"-Parkway BC,
Clinton
R. L. & Beth Sigrest, Yazoo City

Retreat III - May 28-30

Ray Wells, senior adult consultant,
Louisiana Baptist Convention
Marcus Peagler, Madison

Sponsored by the
Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

"Helping to Bring Mississippi and the World to Jesus"

HOUSE TOPS.

Young worker unimpressed by Garaywa

By Marjean Patterson, Ex. Dir.
Mississippi WMU

Though it has been more than forty years ago, I vividly remember my first visit to Camp Garaywa.

It was a Saturday morning in April 1957. Edwina Robinson (Miss Ed), then executive director of the Mississippi Woman's missionary Union (WMU) had invited me to Mississippi for a visit with the WMU Personnel Committee, in view of coming to work as Young Woman's Auxiliary Director.

Miss Ed had planned for Nettie Ree Traylor (Miss Net), her long-time assistant in the office, to take me to visit Garaywa prior to the interview with the committee.

I had flown to Jackson from Louisville — the very first time I'd ever been in the state of Mississippi. Knew nothing about the work, knew absolutely no one, couldn't remember which university was located at Starkville and which at Oxford. Was I ignorant!

As we drove through a cattle

gap on the dirt road off Clinton-Raymond Road, I kept thinking to myself "What's so special about this place?"

Good thing I didn't verbalize what I was thinking, because Miss Net would have killed me on the spot! Later I would hear stories, often and numerous, from the same Miss Net about all the hardships endured by Miss Ed and others when Mississippi had no residence camp for girls and boys who were in GAs, RAs or YWAs.

That camp, seemingly so isolated from the world out from Clinton, just didn't excite me the way it did Miss Ed and Miss Net. Don't believe Miss Net ever forgave me for not "having a fit" over Garaywa!

Needless to say, my first impression was not my lasting one!

Soon after I became part of the WMU staff, I was spending large chunks of time at Garaywa.

Not only did I begin to really appreciate our camp, I was glad when Miss Ed asked me to direct camps for a couple of summers.

I saw hundreds of women pour into Garaywa for various kinds of leadership training. It seemed to me that Miss Ed knew everyone by first name. How in the world could she do

that? Did she know *everybody* in the state? As a matter of fact, she *did* know almost everybody in the state.

More than 40 years later, I know why so many people have a warm, soft spot in their hearts concerning Camp Garaywa.

I have some understanding of why women — and some men — have poured their financial resources and influence into that place.

I know why church missions leaders encourage their children to spend a week at Garaywa each summer. Not only do they encourage them — they load them up in vans or church buses and take them to this spot which means so much to so many in Mississippi.

A dream come true will be our new 30-room, motel-style building designated to house adults for retreats. It will take



\$1.5 million to make this dream a reality.

Camp Garaywa truly is a special place for Mississippi Baptists, and we look forward to continuing its ministry through the addition of the new lodge.

WBS cartoon series available

Editor:

Again this year I have prepared a series of ten cartoons to illustrate the 1998 Winter Bible Study (WBS) on the Parables of Luke's Gospel. These can be used in many ways, but most teachers transfer them to overhead cells and use them during their Winter Bible Study sessions. The cartoons are free but we ask for \$2 to cover postage and handling.

Joe McKeever, pastor
First Baptist Church
P.O. Box 1357
Kenner, LA 70065



Groups urged to leave tabs

ATLANTA (BP) — Ever tried to pull the pop-tab off the top of an aluminum soft-drink can? Thousands have — including many church members — usually in response to well-intentioned drives to collect the tabs for kidney dialysis or other causes.

There are no such programs, officials say, and church and civic groups interested in recycling aluminum for charitable purposes would be better off

selling the entire can for more money and less effort.

A one-gallon milk jug full of tabs is only worth about 50 cents, so Reynolds Aluminum is urging fundraising campaigns to sell the whole cans.

REVIVAL DATES

Janice (Perry): Nov. 2-5; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Lamar Williams, evangelist; Edward Jordan, music; Bob Goolsby, pastor.

Raymond (Metro): Nov. 2-5; Sunday, 8:30 and 11 a.m., and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. noon and 7 p.m.; Mike Gilchrist, Shreveport, La., evangelist; Billy Causey, Raymond Church, music; Tommy A. Jarrett, pastor.

Glade Laurel: Nov. 2-5; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.;

Mon.-Wed., noon and 7 p.m.; Fred Williams, Dothan, Ala., evangelist; Jimmy Guthrie, Laurel, music; Mike Thompson, pastor.

Puckett (Rankin): Nov. 2-5; Sunday, regular times; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Gary Bowlin, Brandon, evangelist; Steve Ainsworth, Brandon, music; Barry Ward, pastor.

Riverside, Clarksdale: Nov. 2-6; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., lunch served at noon; Bill Stafford, Chattanooga, Tenn., evangelist.

First, Columbia: Nov. 9-12; services, noon and 6:30 p.m.; Jim Ponder, Orlando Fla., evangelist; Joe Atkinson, Arlington, Texas, music; Wayne VanHorn, pastor.

Euclatubba, Saltillo: youth revival; Nov. 10-12; 7 p.m.; Mon., James Lewis, New Albany, message; Tues. and Wed., Steven Evans, Pontotoc,

message; Praise Band, Blue Mountain Baptist Student Union, music; John Hearn, pastor; Scott Witcher, associate pastor.

Shiloh (Carroll): Nov. 2-5; Sunday, 11 a.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Johnny Carr, youth director, South Louisville Church, evangelist; Doug Warren, pastor, music.

Valley Grove, Tupelo: Nov. 2-5; 7 p.m. nightly; Gregg Hearndon, Pontotoc, evangelist; Andy Russell, Pontotoc, music; John Shackelford, pastor.

First Fannin (Rankin): Nov. 9-12; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; John McBride, director of missions, Copiah Association, evangelist; John Moore, Brandon, music; Leroy J. Brewer Jr., pastor.

Leaf River (Smith): Nov. 9-12; 7 p.m.; Kenny Lang, evangelist; Danny and Nancy Harrison, music.

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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Linda Hardin was honored by First Church, Calhoun City, on Sept. 28, for 40 years as church secretary. At the morning service, words of tribute were shared by former pastors, Lewis Curtis, Graceville, Fla.; Bill R Baker, Clinton; Anthony Kay, present pastor; and Charlotte West, minister of youth. Also present for the occasion was Minnie Lee Pryor, former minister of music, who served over 50 years. At the close of the service, Hardin was presented with a plaque commemorating her 40th anniversary, along with other gifts. A reception was held in the afternoon, at which time a book of letters was presented to her. Calhoun City has had only four pastors during these 40 years. Charles Brock of Zephyrhills, Fla., former pastor, was unable to be present. Pictured, (from left) are Jim Keyser, minister of music; West; Baker; Hardin; Curtis; and Kay.

Calvary Church, Petal, ordained Shawn Panni to the ministry of youth on Oct. 5. He is presently attending William Carey College. David Shofner is pastor.



Panni

Perkinston Church celebrates 100th anniversary on Nov. 2

Perkinston Church, Perkinston, will celebrate its 100th anniversary on Nov. 2. The church held its first service August 1897 in a small frame building located at the site of the Perkinston cemetery. Elder R. N. Davis was the first pastor. Activities will include

Sunday School, 10 a.m., and church services, 11 a.m. Former pastors and the granddaughter of Davis will be present to share in the celebration. The day will conclude with dinner on the grounds in fellowship hall. For more information, call (601) 928-7532.

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DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS: Needed for new association in mid-delta of Mississippi. Resumes are being accepted until December 31, 1997. People skills and self-starting a must. This association will consist of 40 churches and missions. Please respond to: Chairman, DOM Search Committee, 2172 Hiway 446, Skene, MS 38730.

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BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

William Carey College will hold class reunions for 1957, '67, '77, '87, and '92 on Nov. 15 in Thomas Business Building on the Hattiesburg campus as part of its Homecoming events. For tickets, reservations, and more information contact the Alumni Office at (601) 582-6107.

The Department of Christian Studies and Philosophy of Mississippi College will host the 12th annual Dr. and Mrs. Howard E. Spell lectures on Nov. 3-4. The featured will be William H. Willimon, dean of the Chapel and professor of Christian Ministry, Duke University, N.C. He will speak in the A.E. Wood Coliseum on Nov. 3. On Nov. 4, he will lead a workshop in the B.C. Rogers Student Center on "What's New in Preaching?" Registration is required at a cost of \$15. To register, call Harold Bryson, (601) 925-3297 or Carole Moore, (601) 925-3265.

Mississippi College Music Department will present Kimberly Griffing Porter, soprano, in a guest recital on Nov. 4, at 8:15 p.m. in Aven Auditorium. She received a bachelor of music degree from the University of Mississippi and a master of music degree from Boston University. A member of the Mississippi Arts Commission's Touring Artists Roster, Porter has been featured as a soloist with Mississippi Opera productions.

The William Clawson Scholarship for 1997-98 has been awarded to Jerry Pitts, Crystal Springs, a senior at Mississippi College. The \$500 cash award was recently awarded by Al Hurt of Clinton (right), a member of the Board of Ministerial Education of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. The scholarship, established in memory of Clawson who served for many years as chairman of Religion at William Carey College, is rotated between the three Mississippi Baptist colleges.



Jerry Pitts and Al Hurt

HOMECOMINGS

Walker Hill, Brandon: Nov. 2; worship, 11 a.m. dinner on the grounds; 2 p.m. service; Kent Shirley and Bernard Nail, guest speakers.

Evansville, Coldwater: Nov. 2; services, 10:30 a.m.; dinner in fellowship hall following services; Wayne King, guest speaker; Miller Blackwood, Olive Branch, guest singer; Bernette Fielder, pastor.

White Oak, Magee: Nov. 2; services celebrating 155 years, 10:30 a.m.; noon meal; 1:15 p.m. service for an old fashioned singing; Don Wilson, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, guest speaker; Rick Tillotson, former music director, guest musician; Tim York, pastor; Shelly Overby, music director.

Grandview, Pearl: Nov. 2; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.; dinner on the grounds; revival services, Nov. 2-5; Sunday, 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Ricky Kennedy, guest speaker, Richard Sparks, music; Wade Chappell, pastor.

Lula (Metro): Nov. 2; 11 a.m.; dinner on the grounds following morning services; Chris King, pastor.

Leesburg (Rankin): Nov. 2; services will include praise, memorial, and celebrating 116

years, 10 a.m.; Jerry File, former interim pastor, sermon; Wayne Buffington, former minister of music, music; Odus Jackson, pastor; Jeff Jones, minister of music and youth.

Edna, Columbia: Nov. 9; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m.; Crawford Williams, former pastor, guest speaker; Philip Fortenberry, former member, guest pianist; lunch followed by afternoon service with Benji Lott, music

director in charge of program; Kenny Peavey, pastor.

Calvary, Durant: Nov. 2; program of music beginning at 10 a.m. featuring Jerry and Spin Smith; Jerry Smith, former pastor, guest speaker; lunch in fellowship hall.

First, Lauderdale: Nov. 9; Bible study, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner in fellowship hall; Danny Watts, pastor; Jerry Hooks, minister of music.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD

Harvest Festival will be held at Bethesda Church, Terry, Oct. 31, at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (601) 878-5141.

The Baptist Women Day of Prayer will be held at St. Elmo Church, Laurel, 2 p.m. on Nov. 2. This annual event is sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance Women's Department and is celebrated by the women of the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention. The theme for the day will be "Celebrate the Peace of Christ." The program will include a memorial tribute for Alma Barnes, who died in April of this year. She was a leader in the National Baptist Convention and a promoter of the Day of Prayer. She also served as a home missionary in Mississippi. The speakers will be Dell Scoper for the Southern Baptist Women, Richard Brogan for the Mississippi Baptist Convention

Board, Sarah Crosby for the National Baptist Women, and Margaret Fairburn, special speaker, a retired missionary to Liberia and the Ivory Coast. She is now associated with Blue Mountain College.

Judgement House, scheduled for Oct. 30, 31, and Nov. 1, at McDowell Road Church, Jackson, has been cancelled.

Pal-O-Ween will be held at Raymond Road Church, Jackson, Oct. 30, 6-8:30 p.m. For more information, call 372-6154.

Eastside Church, Pearl, will sponsor a Children Harvest Fest for preschool through 6th grade, Nov. 1, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Also, the showing of "Repeat Performance" from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, will be held on Nov. 2 at 6 p.m. Rob Burns is pastor. For more information, call 939-2433.



Clear Branch Church, Wesson, recently held an Old Fashion Day on Oct. 5. James L. Nichols is pastor.



GAs of First Church, Hazlehurst, were recently recognized for their accomplishments in the area of Missions Involvement. Those recognized were (pictured, front row) Erica Douglas, Julie Hankins, Laura Higdon, Brooke Deacon, Ashley Newman; second row, Chelsea Williams, Cathryn Cartwright, Virginia Little, Katie Jackson; third row, Rebecca Hankins, Hannah Jordan, Emily Higdon, and Brittney Newman. Leaders are Tracy Fischer and Rita Jackson, and Sherry Davis is the director. Robert M. Hanvey is pastor.



RAs of First Church, Hazlehurst, were recently recognized for their work with Missions. Those recognized were (pictured, first row) Daniel Henderson, Phillip Douglas, Alex Guess, Trey Fischer, Seth Cliburn, Bryan Jones; second row, Bo Wilson, Joshua Scruggs, Hank Jordan, Eric Walker, Clark Little, Stephen Bozeman; third row, D. J. Cliburn, Michael Newman, Mark Jones, Jay Keywood, Chase Davis, Preston Berry; fourth row, Jake Guess, Stephen Assink, Randle Scruggs, Lucas DeLaRiva, Phil Walker, Brandon Paul Brooks, Langston Berry, Nick Newman, not pictured. Leaders are Mark Henderson, Jerry Keywood, and Art Stevens, and Randy Hankins is director. Robert M. Hanvey is pastor.

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STAFF CHANGES

Charles Hardy has been called as pastor of Midway Church, Jackson. He will assume his duties on Nov. 2.



Hardy

Trinity Church, Fulton, has called **David W. Aultman** as pastor effective Nov. 1. A native of Hattiesburg, Aultman received his education at the University of Southern Mississippi and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was Unity Church, Moselle.

Puckett Church, Rankin Association, has called **Steve Ainsworth**, Brandon, as minister of music.

J. Thomas Littlejohn of Crystal Springs recently resigned as pastor of Smyrna Church, Hazlehurst, after serving for 5 1/2 years. He continues to teach in the local school. Littlejohn is available for supply or interim work.

Center Grove Church, Oktibbeha Association, has called **Elliot McCardle**, of Starkville, as youth pastor. Jack Teer is pastor.



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Acknowledge Christ as Lord.
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Sharkey-Issequena Association recently met a challenge goal of \$7,500 to help offset one day's operating expense for the Baptist Children's Village. Actual gifts of \$8,701.25 far surpassed the goal. David A. Jones and Russell Stewart, presented the challenge to each associational church. An offer was made by an individual in another part of the state to match penny-for-penny all that would be raised. Pictured (from left) front row, are Stewart, chairman of deacons at First Church, Anguilla; Jones, pastor, First Church, Anguilla; back row, Reese Kyzar, interim pastor of Cary Church; C. Lamar Frizzell, pastor, Straight Bayou Church; Dennis E. Salley Jr., pastor, Valley Park; Park Neff, interim pastor of Deer Creek Church. Millard Caulder, pastor, First Church, Rolling Fork, and Nick Smith, pastor, Delta City Church, not pictured.



GAs of Green's Creek Church, Petal, were recognized in a special service on Sept. 7. Girls (pictured) participating were Whitney Smith, Brandi Murphy, Candice Weldon, Katie Collins, Jennifer Pierce, Morgan Dewease, Bethany Johnston, Nikki Gatlin, Wendy Gatlin, Ashley Barding, Breanna Johnston, Kendall Roberts, Molly Lott, Monica Spell, Amy Hamm, Kimberly Murphy, Jennifer Scott, Karmen Phillips, Penny Gatlin, and Alisha Powell. GA leaders are Glenda Manning, Shar Soldin, Janet Hamm, and Pat Rogers. Michael C. Routon is pastor.



Carterville Church, Petal, held its annual Acteen Recognition Service on Oct. 19. Those achieving Studiact level Queen with Scepter were Rhea Sloan, Megan Carley, and Kristi Rounsaville. Achieving Studiact level of Queen was Meredith Hubbard. Leland M. Hogan is pastor.

Rheumatologist James G. Wilson, will discuss "Differential Diagnosis: How Physicians Determine Is It Lupus or A Similar Disease" on Nov. 1 at 2 p.m. in the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center auditorium. For more information, call the Lupus Foundation of America, Mississippi Chapter, at (601) 366-5655 or (800) 866-9606.

Leaf River Church, Smith County, will host the Domestic Abuse Family Shelter in Laurel on Nov. 2 at 6 p.m. with a fellowship to follow. Guest speaker will be Becky Sims, director of the Center. The church will also sponsor a Fall Fellowship Festival on Nov. 8 at 5 p.m.



Ground breaking ceremony was held Oct 5 at First Church, Horn Lake, for a new 831 seat worship center which will include a music suite and office, Sunday School rooms, and chapel. Pictured (from left) are James Woods, pastor; Kayla Ponton; Clifford Epps; James Faust; Laburn Dye; David Von Boeckman; Bruce Nicholson; Midge May; Mildred Garner; Edward McMaster; and Timmy Green.



Acteens of First Church, Shannon, recently held their Queen Coronation Service. Pictured (from left) back row, are Angie Simmons, leader; Queens, Sarah Hopper, Shannon Hendrix, Katie Witthauer, Lane Mask, Hope Hallmark, Andrea Hallmark, Ann Ellis, Jennifer Arledge; and Miriam Hallmark, leader. Front row, Crown Bearers, Mitchell Hopper, Hannah Hathorn, Hannah Chandler, Magan Wilburn, Melanie Johnson, Lindsey Wilburn, Maggie Beth Porter. Mark Cayson is pastor.

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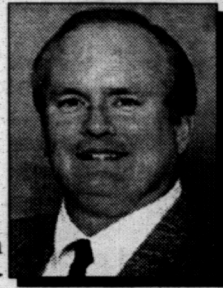
Ezra 6

By Wayne VanHorn

When Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, destroyed the Temple in 586 B.C. many of God's people believed that their world had come to an end. Their temple was gone and they were being led away into exile. They had no way of knowing that seventy years later, in 516 B.C., the Temple would be rebuilt and that Nebuchadnezzar's great Babylon would be relegated to the pages of history for twenty-three years. Our God works in mysterious ways. In 539 B.C. the Persians, led by Cyrus the Great, defeated the Babylonians. Cyrus issued an

Emancipation Proclamation the following year, allowing the Hebrew exiles to return to Judah. These exiles laid the foundation for the new Temple in 536 B.C. After a sixteen year period of misplaced priorities, work resumed on the Temple in 520 B.C. and the project was completed in 516 B.C. Today's lesson focuses upon the events surrounding the completion of this second Temple.

Finishing the Job (6:14-15). Ezra 6:14 mentions Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets whose preaching prompted the resumption of the work on the Temple in 520 B.C. We are



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blessed to have the books of these two prophets in the Old Testament. According to Haggai 1:4 the people had delayed rebuilding the Temple while they worked on their own luxurious homes. The remedy was for them to build (Hag. 1:8). Similarly, Zechariah's message was one of assuring the people of the Lord's presence and protection as they did the work. The Lord promised to be a "wall of fire" about Jerusalem, protecting her from all enemies (Zech. 2:5). The Lord's command was carried out with the blessing of the secular authorities, Cyrus and Darius.

Dedicating the Results (6:16-18). The completion of construction was only the beginning of the reinstitution of the Temple sacrifice system. The new edifice had to be properly dedicated. The term "dedi-

cated" in Ezra 6:16 appears also in I Kings 8:63. This term is rendered "Hanukkah," and refers to the "initiation or commencement of something new." Today, Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the Temple during the Maccabean period, but the term was used in 966 B.C. and in 516 B.C. to refer to the dedication of the first and second temples respectively. The sin offering was intended to set "all Israel" in good standing with God. Ezra 6:18 is important for understanding the new focus on doing things as God had declared to Moses. The exile was interpreted as punishment for breaking the Law of Moses. Only obedience to that Law could reduce the possibility of further difficulties.

Celebrating the Blessings (6:19-22). The signal event of the formation of the nation of Israel had been the exodus out of Egypt. Nine hundred years later, the people kept the

Passover to recall the miraculous intervention of God on behalf of their ancestors. With the return from the Babylonian exile and the completion of the second Temple, the people were filled with joy. They celebrated God's "new exodus." Just as the Lord had overwhelmed Pharaoh with the mighty plagues, He now had turned the heart of the "king of Assyria to them" (Ezra 6:22). God had enabled them to achieve miraculous things and had given them a new beginning. The only appropriate response was to celebrate with joy and to dedicate this new Temple and themselves to the obedient service of God. We are reminded of Jesus' words, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15; NRSV). Has the Lord enabled you to achieve something for which you need to celebrate?

VanHorn is pastor, First Church, Columbia.

LIFE AND WORK

To pray or not to pray

Ps. 28:6-7; Col. 4:2-4; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; 1 Pet. 5:6-7

By Geneva England

Christians must pray fervently—without ceasing—believing that through faith and prayer we can "move mountains." Conversely, without prayer we are without power. Prayer nourishes a vibrant, growing relationship with God. We have the freedom to pray or not to pray, but when we ignore God, we receive just due. Only through continual prayer do we claim the inner joy and peace that transcends worldly understanding.

The next five lessons offer insight into some of the many prayer passages in the Bible. Just as one of Jesus' followers asked, "Lord, teach us to pray," (Luke 11:1) we too must learn how to approach our Father

reverently and sincerely.

Two basic requirements must be remembered every time believers approach the throne of grace: (1) to pray within God's will and (2) to pray in Jesus' name. James 4:2-3 instructs, "...Ye have not because ye ask not, ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss."

We Show We Trust God (Ps. 28:6-7). Prayer connects us with God as we lift our hearts to him in praise and adoration, confessing our sins, and making requests. God then reaches down with his tender, loving arms, lifts our burdens, and provides sufficient grace for us. In his omniscience, God knows our needs before we ask, but



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his divine will is for us to show our dependence and obedience.

The Psalmist David cried unto the Lord, "his Rock," asking for deliverance from "the pit" (some unnamed peril) (Psalm 28:1). He trusted in God alone for deliverance, knowing his enemies' disregard for God and his creative acts. He used military

terms: shield (to protect his body) and strength (to overcome his enemies with either might or mind). His heart leaped with joy as he praised God in song! We can experience this same joy through prayer!

We Advance the Gospel (Col. 4:2-4). The Apostle Paul challenged the Colossian Church to pursue every opportunity to pray and especially to undergird him as he preached the Gospel of Christ to Gentiles who had no previous knowledge of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Paul prayed for an "open door" to proclaim

repentance of sin and belief in a living Savior who died in the sinners' place. Through prayer, Christians participate in advancing this Gospel.

We Obey God (1 Thess. 5:16-18). To "rejoice evermore" (v. 16) and to "pray without ceasing" (v. 17) sound like contradictions, but they aren't. To "rejoice evermore" means lifting praises and petitions to our Heavenly Father who hears and answers our prayers.

To "pray without ceasing" necessitates being in constant fellowship with the Lord so that silent prayers are uttered naturally and spontaneously. This prayerful attitude, even as we work, helps us develop the godly characteristics enumerated by Paul. Additionally, Christians should not allow their prayer life to remain in the desert; but dwell in the oasis, drinking from the deep cistern of peace and contentment that only the Lord has to offer. If Christians leave lengthy gaps in their prayer life, they often find

themselves in worldly trouble.

God wants us to thank him for our gifts and troubles. Yes, troubles, too. By praying through our problems, we show a strong trust in God and, at the same time, strengthen our faith. We must lean on the Lord daily in prayer.

We Know God Cares (Peter 5:6-7). God cares for his children by blessing them. The Bible teaches that just as an earthly father doesn't give his child a stone for bread but slaughters the best fatted calf to celebrate the child's return. God does more. In Peter's instructions for prayer, Christians learn that they should be humble, not arrogant, because God hates a haughty spirit (Proverbs 16:18)—nor demanding because God has his own timetable.

Remember, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

England is a member of First Church, Grenada.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Trusting God

Genesis 15:1-18

By Jason Bird

It is sometimes difficult to continue walking by faith when God doesn't operate according to our own timetable. Even a great man of faith like Abram must have gotten frustrated at the time God took to fulfill his promise of giving Abram an heir. In addition to the wait for an heir, Abram also experienced a famine in the land God had promised him and had been through some difficult times with his nephew Lot. In the midst of these difficult times, God reappeared to Abram and formally made a covenant with him to serve as a reminder that God is always faithful to his promises.

A word of assurance from God (15:1-5). Before God made a covenant with Abram, he assured him of his power and presence. Abram must have feared God had forgotten or abandoned him. God intended his word to Abram to calm his fears. In stating that he was Abram's shield, God indicated he would continue to protect Abram. The fact that he was Abram's great reward reminded him God had not forgotten his promise.

Even today, adults need reminders that God's power and presence are always available. The circumstances of life tend to erode our faith if we are not careful. Fortunately,



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through prayer, worship, and the study of God's Word, God reminds us he has not forgotten us.

Abram revealed his frustration by questioning God's plan. He began to think his slave would inherit all he had since he had no child.

But again, God reiterated that Abram would have a natural heir who would be the child of promise.

Faith in God's promise (15:6). "Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness." This statement is so important that it is quoted three times in the New Testament (Romans 4:3, Galatians 3:6, James 2:23). Being right with God is not a result of man's good works. God declares we are right with him in return for our faith. Abram's faith in the promises of God are essential to the

covenant relationship with God because both require trust in God's faithfulness.

Having faith in God is not just knowing some facts about God. Having faith is trusting in his word so much you trust him with your life. Abram trusted God completely and that is why he was declared righteous.

A covenant with God (15:20). Abram, like many believers, wanted proof his faith was not misplaced. Rather than being angry with Abram for questioning the promise of God, God established a covenant with Abram. The covenant went beyond just a promise—it was a binding agreement. The purpose of this was to give Abram assurance of the ultimate fulfillment of all the promises God had made. When darkness descended, God appeared as a smoking fire pot and as a torch to Abram in order to confirm that all he had said would take place.

God didn't give Abram a glimpse into the future. The covenant relationship was a relationship built on faith. Abram had come this far on faith and he would continue his journey by having faith God would honor the covenant he had made.

Abram's experience with God has great implications for believers today. First, we can know God understands our fears about the future. He listened lovingly to Abram's questions and reassured him of his love and presence. Second, we can know God doesn't work according to our timetable, yet an apparent delay on his part does not mean he has forgotten his children. The God who was faithful to Abram is the same God who is faithful to his children today. What a joy it is to know we can trust him completely!

Bird is pastor, 15th Avenue Church, Meridian.

Missionary widow looks to God for comfort

By C. Lacy Thompson
Louisiana Baptist Message

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP) — It has been several months since Sherry Blackwell's missionary husband, "Boots," died after an automobile accident on an isolated Brazil highway, the night Blackwell was left on her own after 28 years of marriage to raise five teenage children. Well, not entirely alone.

Blackwell, whose Louisiana family made Brazil their home in 1981, experienced God's sustaining love from his Word and from fellow Christians.

"It's amazing how I just wanted — more than any other time in my life — to see what God would say to me and how

he would help me through his Word," Blackwell said.

"And every time — it never failed — I went to the Psalms and it was like God wrapped his arms around me, just comforting me through his Word.

"The psalmist would talk about how deep in sorrow he was and about the problems he was facing and yet how God brought him out of it. And I just claimed that (promise) every time I read it and said I 'know' he will bring me out of it."

She said the Psalms confirmed God "does have a future for me and a plan and there is life after this — even though you feel like there's not."

Blackwell said she has "finally gotten to the point where I

feel like I can think about the future without it being so overwhelming. But for the first couple of months I couldn't even think about the future. I just took a day at a time."

Very close behind the comfort of the Scripture for her was the support of Christian family and friends.

Still, there are hard things to face, Blackwell said. "One is thinking I may be alone for the rest of my life. And I don't want to be. And I know really I'm not alone because I do have the Lord. But it's companionship I mean.

"Then the other thing is I get mad at God when I think I have to raise five teenagers without my husband — because I needed him for that part," Blackwell added with tears in her eyes. "It's been hard to accept that."

Blackwell said she leans on God especially to make it through the nights. "During the day I can stay busy, but at night

when you're there and by yourself, that's when it gets hard."

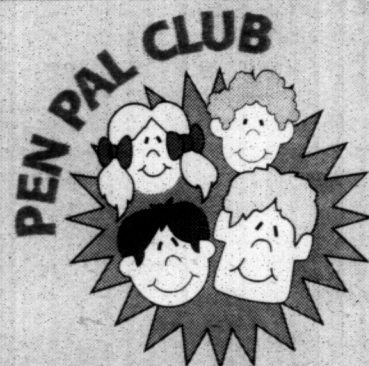
Some nights, anger and tears come. "But it only lasts a few minutes and then it was as though God's arm was just around me and I would feel such a peace and a comfort... I had never experienced that kind of peace before.

"I don't know how to explain it except that it was like he covered me and wrapped his arms around me and I just felt like I was going to be OK.

"I just knew that. It was a feeling, an enveloping of his love that he gave to me.

"After all that I've been through and seeing how God has taken care of me through this, I know without a doubt that he's going to continue taking care of me."

"Boots" Blackwell's uncle, Joe Blackwell, is pastor of Fernwood Church, Pike Association.



Dear Pen Pal Club,

My name is Carly Smith. I'm 11 and will be 12 on July 14, 1998. I go to First Baptist Church McComb, MS. I am an active member in church by GAs, choir, and Sunday School. I like to sing, swim, dance, go to girl scouts, and being with my friends. I have brown hair, and brown eyes. I have two brothers; Shawn, 17; and Adam, 21. I

love spending time with Adam because he's usually at college.

Please write to:
1009 Northwood East Road
Summit, MS 39666

Dear Pen Pal Club,

My name is Ashley Sasser. I go to North Pike Middle School. I am in the 6th grade and I am 11 years old. I will be 12 on January 11, 1998. I go to Moak's Creek Baptist Church. There I am active in GAs, choir, and Sunday School. I enjoy dance, singing, swimming, girl scouts, piano, and being with my friends. I have strawberry blonde hair and brown eyes. I have a cat named Sassy, a calf named Blaze, and 12 sheep.

Please write to:
3050 County Line Road, W.
Summit, MS 39666



The Puppet Team from New Prospect Church, Brookhaven recently shared their talents through music and skits during the yearly recognition service for TeamKid. Top row, left to right: Kayla Case, Aaron Welch, Rochelle Watts. Bottom row: left to right: Renee Watts, Kristi Welch, Laura Peavey. Donna Welch is Puppet Coordinator; Willie T. Welch is pastor.



TeamKid and Pre School TeamKid recognition service at New Prospect Baptist Church, Hwy 84 West, Brookhaven, was recently held during the evening worship service. Medals were awarded to each child for outstanding work in Discipleship Training. Bob Watts is Discipleship Training Director, Willie T. Welch is pastor.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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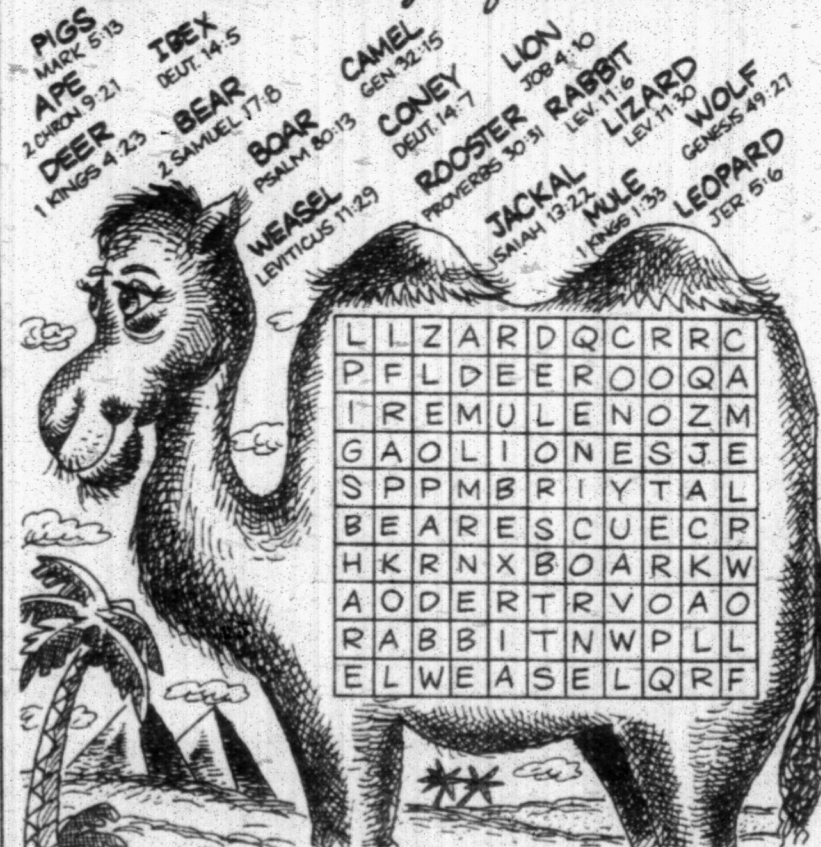
YOSC FIWIA: RPRXIIA

Clue: F equals S

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Psalms Eight One.

ANIMALS

The camel is just one of 17 animals hidden below. Can you find the others?



Source: Fun Stuff for Kids by Michael Streff (Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), available at your local bookstore or by calling 800-727-3480.